ONE: CREATE CONNECTIONS
Begin classes with ice breakers or other community building activities, help students build relationships with you and with each other through small group activities, partner with students to set community guidelines for your class at the beginning of each semester.

TWO: COMMUNICATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS
Be explicit in communicating the goals, tasks, and expectations of every assignment, regularly check in with students and ask what questions they have or if clarification is needed, provide learning objectives for assignments and lectures or discussion sessions.

THREE: BE ACCESSIBLE
Encourage students to ask for help, explain what office hours are and how to prepare for them, set routines for responding to students’ emails and share this schedule with your students. If portions of your class or office hours are online, develop specific plans that increase your accessibility.

FOUR: BE FLEXIBLE
Show empathy and concern for your students’ well-being and design coursework and projects that allows space for flexibility when students need it, recognize that differences exist in students’ access to resources.

FIVE: ACKNOWLEDGE STUDENTS’ PERSONAL CHALLENGES
Check in with students to assess technological and academic resources, be aware of campus resources (academic and personal) and share these with students, be supportive of students’ personal situations as these can profoundly impact their ability to be academically successful.

For additional resources and more information on how to support first-generation college students, visit the 1stGen@Iowa website at firstgen.uiowa.edu.

The initial version of this handout, published in Fall 2020, was developed using data and input gathered at the start of the pandemic in Spring 2020. However, the strategies outlined here remain relevant even in post-pandemic classroom settings. Additionally, while this document was created with data and quotes from first-generation students, using these strategies in the classroom will be of benefit to all students.